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SUBJECT: Recent Views of Willy Brandt on World Problems

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Summary

Since the Vienna meeting between President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev, West Berlin's Governing Mayor, Willy Brandt, in his public utterances destined for nation-wide dissemination (as opposed to the speeches during his whistlestop tour), has increasingly concentrated on global issues and has paid very little attention to domestic German matters. This development probably derives in equal measure from three factors: (1) The SPD's domestic program will be fully unfolded only as the actual campaign gets under way; (2) the focus of international discussion on Berlin and the German problem has provided Brandt, in his dual capacity as Governing Mayor and Kanzler-kandidat, with new opportunities to speak on foreign policy matters and to emphasize points of difference between the Adenauer government and the SPD opposition; and (3) he is genuinely much more interested in these issues than in internal matters.

In the period since the Vienna meeting, Brandt has developed four main themes: (1) He insists that there has been a shift of emphasis of Soviet policy, in that the USSR's main thrust is now aimed primarily at freezing the division of Germany and only secondarily directed toward altering the status of West Berlin; (2) he has been critical of what he considers to be the predilection of the West for concentrating its efforts on meeting various military contingencies and has called for the West to take the initiative in the diplomatic field; (3) connected with his demand that the West must act rather than react to Soviet moves and must make greater efforts to influence the course of the international debate, Brandt has suggested

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that the convening of a peace conference of the fifty-two nations formerly at war with Germany is a plan worthy of serious consideration; and (4) he has urged West Germany to take a more active role in the formulation of Western policy; so far, however, he has failed to come forward with concrete suggestions as to what he believes this German contribution ought to be.

Brandt has been consistent to the point of being repetitious in restating these general themes: he has, however, done so on occasion with varying formulations. Such deviations in language were quickly picked up by the press and are at least partly responsible for the dissatisfaction in press circles with what has been termed Brandt's vagueness and purposefully devious formulations.

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1. Soviet Aims in the Current Crisis

On June 17 Brandt characterized the USSR's announced intent to conclude a separate peace treaty with its German satellite as an act of "marriage with one-self," an act which, he said, "we can hardly prevent the Kremlin" from performing. On July 17, however, in an interview carried by Bildzeitung, he was quoted as saying that this Soviet intent must be prevented by the West through the "launching of a political offensive." As long as Brandt played down the West's ability to take measures preventing the conclusion of a separate treaty, he also implied that Khrushchev was operating essentially with the threat of such a treaty; he expressed the thought that Khrushchev would think carefully before going through with it's plan because (a) this was a card he could play only once, and (b) the USSR would also incur certain disadvantages as a result of having concluded a separate treaty, in that it would eliminate itself from any further discussion of the German problem. As Brandt came to embrace the view that the conclusion of a separate treaty should be prevented, if possible, he also appeared to give greater weight, in assessing the probability of Khrushchev's carrying out his threat, to the factor that the Soviet Premier had by now come dangerously close to becoming a prisoner of his own pronouncements.

In early July in a statement before the SPD leadership in Bonn, Brandt reportedly said that at first he had interpreted the Soviet June 4 memorandum as an attempt to rekindle the Berlin crisis but that he had later become convinced that Moscow's primary aim was to render permanent the division of Germany under international law through the signing of a separate peace pact with the Pankow regime. While taking generally a very serious view of the situation created by the Vienna memorandum, Brandt's conviction of the shift in Soviet emphasis from Berlin to Germany as a whole led him on July 3 to state that his apprehensions concerning the immediate threat to Berlin had diminished. Rather than to look for a dramatic worsening of the crisis, he thought the West must be prepared for a resumption of Soviet "salami tactics."

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In connection with stressing that Berlin is not primarily menaced by recent Soviet moves, Brandt increasingly developed the theme of Berlin's role as a "safety valve." Partly, no doubt, in the hope that his words might in some way influence Soviet decisions, and also in order to drive a wedge between the Pankow leaders and the Soviets, Brandt stated his belief that Moscow might be more aware than Pankow of the utility of West Berlin as a safety valve, draining off the accumulation of the pressure of discontent among the East German populace and thus preventing acts of despair on the part of the people.

2. West's Defensive Attitude and the Need to take Initiative

On July 3, after certain alleged Allied contingency plans had been extensively discussed in the press, Brandt asserted that such planning was inadequate to meet the issues confronting the free world. The West is half lost, he said, if it only asks "what shall we do if ...?" (See Berlin's 04 to Bonn, 05 to Dept.) Speaking before the Senat on July 4, Brandt reportedly expressed doubts that the emergency plans of the Allies would ever reach implementation. In considering counter-measures, the West should beware that it not prepare "for the wrong wedding." Rather, the West should try to dictate the political themes of the dispute with the USSR.

In these critical remarks, Brandt left it open whether he was speaking of Allied plans designed to meet East German moves against West Berlin traffic or against Soviet transfer of the control over Allied access to the East Germans. Brandt's remarks appeared not to be directed against counter-measure planning per se, but against the public controversy surrounding it, which he rightly felt contributed more than Soviet threats to spreading a certain amount of alarm among the Berlin population. Refusing to discuss in public what he thought of Western plans, Brandt usually countered with a warning of the great danger that would befall the West if it "waged a war of nerves against itself."

In commending the Allies for their notes of reply to the Khrushchev memorandum, Brandt lauded the fact that the West had made it clear that more than Berlin was at stake in the current crisis. However, he continued to voice the criticism that the West had centered too much on topics raised by the other side and that the public debate was concentrating too much on the "what do we do if ...?" theme. In this connection he has protested repeatedly against any discussion of a new status for West Berlin alone, which in his opinion serves to support the Soviet contention that East Berlin is a part of the Soviet Zone and tends to obfuscate the Four-Power status of Berlin and its extension over the entire area of the city. The "normalization" of conditions must begin in the Soviet Sector where the real anomalies exist, he avers.

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3. A 52-Nation Peace Conference

At a press conference in Bonn on July 7, Mayor Brandt described as "very worthy of consideration" the idea of calling a conference of all 52 nations at war with Germany for the consideration of an all-German peace treaty. (Originally this idea was proposed by editor Silex in Tagesspiegel and by correspondent Haffner in Die Welt; see Berlin's 09 to Bonn, 10 to Dept.) Brandt emphasized that this was not the only possible solution, but one which had distinct merits, especially that of being a positive step, rather than a mere reaction to Soviet moves. More important, he said, was the opportunity it would afford to force the Soviets unequivocally to state their position regarding self-determination for all Germans. (Later, on July 21, he expanded this point by saying that all the one-time war enemies of Germany would be and should be constrained to state clearly whether Germany is to be granted or denied the basic right of self-determination.) In response to Adenauer's criticism of the idea, Brandt, who had meanwhile come to endorse it quite strongly, asserted that such a 52-nation conference would in no way diminish Four-Power responsibilities in Germany since these could expire only with the signing of an all-German peace treaty, ratified by an all-German Parliament.

In the course of elaborating on the nature of such a conference, Brandt suggested that it would be possible to consult representatives of both parts of Germany, just as had been the case during the Geneva Foreign Ministers' Conference in 1959. He also suggested that the conference might properly concern itself with questions of European security and that German and other international proposals of past years concerning this subject could then play an important role. Although he probably referred to nothing more than restoring the Western Geneva-proposals regarding a European security force, his reply to a reporter's question that he would also favor looking into the possibility of creating an atom-free zone immediately earned him the rebuke from his political opponents that he was favoring a Rapacki-type of settlement. In a DPA interview on July 13, Brandt again indicated his endorsement of the 52-nation peace conference. He said the conference would be a way of breaking the deadlock over the German issue; simultaneously, the West would regain the initiative. He made light of the Chancellor's argument that Germany would be confronted at such a conference by 52 hostile powers, and asserted that in fact a majority of the 52 nations would support self-determination for all Germans. In any case, he said, a peace treaty without a conference involving all of Germany's former enemies was not possible.

4. Greater German Role in West Policy-Making

This is the theme on which Brandt has been most insistent and at the same time least specific. He has emphasized this theme with the obvious purpose of demonstrating to the public that, if elected, he would do things differently and better. Immediately after the Vienna meeting, when Brandt described the situation

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as serious, he simultaneously chided the Chancellor for attempting to shrug off the serious implications of the Khrushchev memorandum in optimistic formulations. In addition, Brandt has charged time and again that the Federal Government was not doing enough to raise the all-German problem in international discussions, and above all that it was remiss in not seizing the diplomatic initiative. Ever since his return from the United States in March, Brandt has attempted to depict the new American administration as looking for new approaches to world problems (even though he reported it to be as firm on Berlin as its predecessor), insinuating that the Chancellor's rigidity was preventing the West from applying more flexible tactics. He has used the same approach in a far more outspoken vein in commenting on the President's July 25 speech, picking out references to possible East-West negotiations in support of his thesis that Adenauer is really in opposition to the President's approach. Brandt has used language such as "No longer can we ride on the backs of our Allies under the pretense that we are still being re-educated. We have matured and this demands from us a full contribution to the Western community, and not only in D-Marks. Ideas and suggestions are expected of us."

The over-all impression gained from Brandt's recent pronouncements on international problems is that under the combined pressures of the election campaign and his own genuine concern for the fate of Berlin and Germany, he appears to be searching most anxiously for new and independent approaches to vital questions of foreign policy. However, for all his emphasis on the need for new ideas, he has not come out with concrete proposals of his own, other than to emphasize the need to negotiate and to be more flexible, and to endorse the 52-nation peace conference idea.

For the Acting Assistant Chief of Mission:

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